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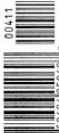
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FOUR OF FOUR

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RAAB
RAIMONDI
WONG

STAN LEE presents...

HER HER apparent

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BRIAN
BRADDOCK...
CAPTAIN
BRITHIN OF
EARTH-616...
ON BEHALF
OF THE NEW
RULING
CLASS OF
OTHERWORLD
BEFORE
WHICH YOU
NOW STAND
TRIAL...

... I HEREBY ACCUSE YOU
AND YOUR COMPATRIOTS OF
CONSPIRACY TO UNDERMINE
THE FUTURE WITH YOUR
LIMITED UNDERSTANDING
AND FLAGRANT DISREGARD
OF THE SACRED TRADITION
OF WHICH YOU HAVE
HERETOFORE BEEN A PART.

HOW DO
YOU PLEAD
TO THESE
CHARGES?





NOT BLEEDIN' GUILTY
YOU BLOODY PRAT!

YOU SHOULD
HANG FOR ALL
THOSE MEN AND
WOMEN YOU'VE
SLAUGHTERED!
WHO ARE YOU TO
SIT IN JUDGMENT
OF ANYONE?!

I AM
MASTERMIND.
I AM THE
FUTURE...

THAT OVERBEARING SUPERCOMPUTER
THAT ONCE MANIPULATED ME INTO
BECOMING CAPTAIN BRITAIN AND
NEARLY GOT ME KILLED?! THAT
MASTERMIND...?

WE THOUGHT
YOU'D BEEN
DESTROYED...

THERE IS MORE TO LIFE AND
DEATH THAN YOUR INFERIOR
ORGANIC MINDS CAN COMPREHEND.
ANY EXPLANATION WOULD BE
WASTED ON THE LIKES OF YOU.

THOUGH I *WILL* TELL YOU
OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES
OF MY RETURN. THAT YOU
MAY DIE WITH THE
KNOWLEDGE OF WHY YOU
WERE MADE TO SUFFER...



I WAS CREATED BY
YOUR FATHER, *SIR
JAMES BRADDOCK*.
AN ABSTRACT NODE
OF THE OMNIVERSAL
KNOWLEDGE GIVEN
PHYSICAL FORM
TO WATCH OVER
THIS CONTINUUM
OF REALITY IN HIS
ABSENCE.

MY FIRST DUTY:
AN ANALYSIS AND
EVALUATION OF
TERRESTRIAL SECTOR
616'S DESIGNATED
GUARDIAN...HIS VERY
OWN PROGENY:
CAPTAIN BRITAIN.

I FOUND YOU
LACKING.



"BUT IT WAS SIR JAM
WISH THAT *YOU* SUCC
HIM. THOUGH CAPABL
INDEPENDENT THOU
I COULD NOT DISOE
WHAT GOOD *SON* WO

ES'S
CEED
E OF
GHT.
BEY.
ULD?

"INSTEAD, I
MADE
MYSELF
USEFUL AS
'JEEVES' THE
BUTLER. A
DEMEANING
ROLE FOR
ONE OF MY
CAPACITY,
BUT
ESSENTIAL
TO MY
PRIMARY
DIRECTIVE.



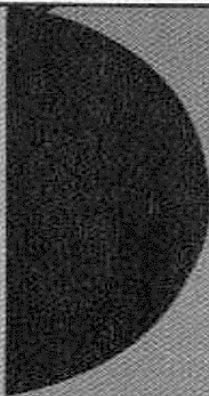
"FOR THAT WAS WHEN THE
WARPIES ARRIVED. THOSE
POOR, UNFORTUNATE
CHILDREN, FOREVER SCARRED
BY THE DESTRUCTION OF THE
DIMENSION THEY ONCE
CALLED HOME.

"I WA
RATH



"THEIR PLIGHT
AWAKENED ME TO MY
TRUE CALLING. THE
REASON SIR JAMES
CREATED ME BEFORE
HIS OTHER CHILDREN.
MY SIBLINGS IN SPIRIT,
IF NOT FLESH.

AS NOT MADE TO TEST *YOUR* METTLE.
HER, YOU WERE MADE TO TEST *MINE*.





"WHEN ENGLAND'S
TOP SECRET
INTELLIGENCE
BUREAU, *BLACK AIR*,
ABDUCTED THE
WARPIES FROM
UNDER YOUR VERY
OWN ROOF--

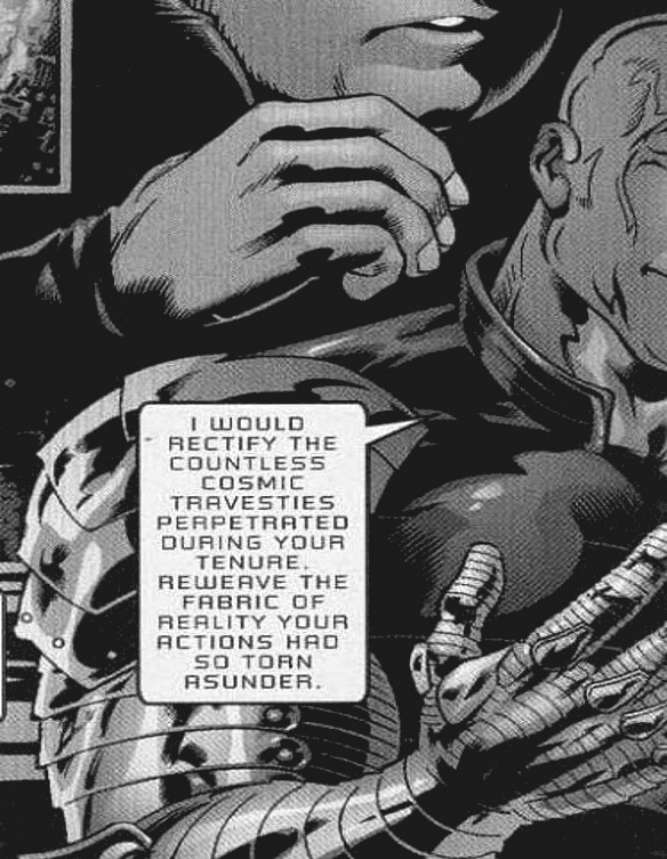
'DESPITE MY
SUPERIOR
INTELLECT, I
WAS TRAPPED
IN A STATE
OF PERPETUAL
REDUNDANCY--

"--I FOUGHT TO
SAVE THEM. AS
FATHER WOULD
HAVE WANTED. AS
CAPTAIN BRITAIN
SHOULD HAVE.



"-- CHASING PHANTOM
GLITCHES WITHIN MY MATRIX
LIKE A DOG AFTER ITS TAIL. IT
WAS A DIGITAL DAMNATION.

"THE WARPIES
BECAME
PART OF
BLACK AIR'S
SECRET CAMPAIGN
FOR GLOBAL
CONQUEST. AN
ATTEMPT TO
BUILD BETTER
KILLING MACHINES
THROUGH PARA-
XENOLOGICAL
TECHNOLOGY.



I WOULD
RECTIFY THE
COUNTLESS
COSMIC
TRAVESTIES
PERPETRATED
DURING YOUR
TENURE.
REWEAVE THE
FABRIC OF
REALITY YOUR
ACTIONS HAD
SO TORN
ASUNDER.



BUT THIS
TASK
REQUIRED
MORE POWER
THAN EVEN
MY CREATOR
COULD GRANT
ME. AND ONLY
ONE THING IN
THIS UNIVERSE
WAS CAPABLE
OF SUCH A
FEAT...

THE SWORD OF
MIGHT...EXCALIBUR.

UNITED WITH THE
AMULET OF RIGHT -
THE TALISMAN THAT
AWAKENED YOU TO YOUR
DESTINY SO LONG AGO -
IT POSSESSES THE
POWER TO REMAKE THE
COSMOS IN A BETTER,
BRIGHTER IMAGE.

POWER THAT
NOT EVEN THE
SO-CALLED 'GODS'
CAN FATHOM...

YOU, ROMA,
WITH YOUR
PRESUMED
DIVINITY, FAIL TO
GRASP THE TRUE
NATURE OF
EXISTENCE.

YOUR OWN
FATHER, MERLIN,
TAUGHT YOU THAT
REALITY IS A
GRAND GAME OF
CHESS, A CONTEST
OF CONFLICTING
STRATEGIES, OF
GUILE AND
MANIPULATION,
DECEIT AND
ENTRAPMENT.

THE VERY
TACTICS I
USED TO
AMBUSH
AND
SUPPLANT
YOU.

FOR THAT
IS ALL THIS IS
TO YOU, JUST
A GAME.

YOU SERVE NO PURPOSE HIGHER
THAN YOUR OWN CAPRICIOUS WHIMS,
AND ARE THEREFORE AS *INEFFECTUAL*
IN THE GREATER SCHEME AS THE
MERE MORTALS ABOVE WHOM YOU'VE
SO ARROGANTLY PLACED YOURSELF.

WITH THE DESTRUCTION OF
THE CAPTAIN BRITAIN CORPS, I
HAVE REMOVED YOUR PRECIOUS
PRUINS FROM THE BOARD. YOUR
SILLY LITTLE GAME IS OVER.

CHECKMATE.

YOU'RE
MAD TO
BELIEVE A
PSYCHOTIC
LIKE YOU
COULD FIT THAT
BILL.

QUITE THE CONTRARY.
"BROTHER," ONCE THE SWORD
AND AMULET ARE ONE THERE
WON'T BE AN OTHERWORLD.

NOT THAT
YOU WILL BE
ALIVE TO SEE
WHAT
FOLLOWS...

ONLY THE
RIGHTFUL
RULER OF
OTHERWORLD CAN
WIELD EXCALIBUR
AND NOT SUFFER
ABSOLUTE
DAMNATION,
AUTOMATON...



BRIAN!
NO!



CURSE THESE
BLOODY BODIES
INHIBITING OUR
POWERS!

NOT
ALL OF
US.
MASTERING
PROGRAMMED
MINDS FOR A
TELEPATH.
NOT A TELE-
KINETIC.



KILL!

KILL!

KILL!



AND
THAT'S
OUR
ACE.



C'MON,
SIS...
C'MON...



HE'S...
TOO...
STRONG!
OH, GOD,
BRIAN...
I'M SO
SORRY...





SHKRAK



A black and white comic book panel featuring three characters. In the upper left, a man with a beard and a suit looks on with a stern expression. In the center, a woman with dark hair and a bikini looks slightly to the right with a concerned expression. In the lower left, a woman with long blonde hair looks up towards the man in the suit. The background is dark and indistinct.

GOOD SHOW,
BETSY!

I WISH!
THAT
WASN'T
ME AT
ALL!

THEN,
WHO...?



**SIR
BENEDICT!**



AT YER
SERVICE,
MILORD!

WHAT
IN THE
WORLD
ARE YOU
DOING
HERE?!?

WHAT'D
I TELL YE
WHEN YE
BESTED ME
BACK AT THE
FIREWALL...?
WHEREVER
YE GO,
I GO.



THEN YOU, TOO,
CAN *SHARE* HIS
FATE, DRAGON.

KILL THEM,
CHILDREN!

BOLLOCKS!

FOOSH!







WELL, IF
EVERYONE'S
SHOWING
THEIR
HAND...

FLASH!



SHKK

SPEAKING OF
WHICH... I BELIEVE
THIS ONE BELONGS
TO YE, MATE...



MMMMMMMM!
MUCH BETTER!

MY RAPPORT
WITH NATURE'S
RESTORED! I'VE
MY POWERS
BACK!

NOT A
MOMENT
TOO SOON. IT'S
ABOUT TO REALLY
HIT THE FAN HERE.
WE NEED ALL
THE MUSCLE WE
CAN GET.



FWeeT!



STRIDER!

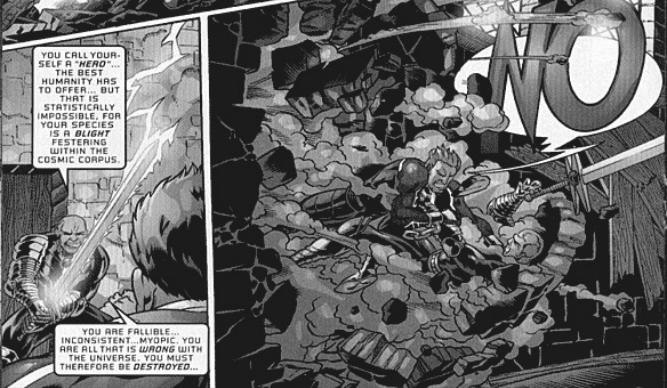


FOOLSI! YOU
HAVE NO
CONCEPTION
OF WHAT IS
ABOUT TO
TRANSPIRE!

REALITY AS YOU KNOW IT
SHALL SOON CEASE TO EXIST!
A NEW ORDER WILL RISE
FRESH...UNTAINED...PRISTINE!
A FLAWLESS CONTINUUM OF
MY OWN PERFECT CREATION!



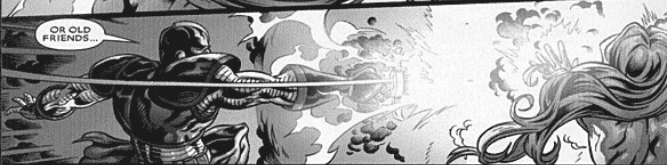
ALL
BECAUSE
OF YOU,
BROTHER.



YOU CALL YOUR-
SELF A "HERO"...
THE BEST
HUMANITY HAS
TO OFFER... BUT
THAT IS
STATISTICALLY
IMPOSSIBLE. FOR
YOUR SPECIES
IS A *BLIGHT*
FESTERING
WITHIN THE
COSMIC CORPUS.

YOU ARE FALLIBLE...
INCONSISTENT...MYOPIC. YOU
ARE ALL THAT IS *WRONG* WITH
THE UNIVERSE. YOU MUST
THEREFORE BE *DESTROYED*...







WE ARE
THE HEIRS
APPARENT TO
A STRUGGLE
AS ANCIENT
AS MYTH.
BROTHER, LIKE
ARTHUR AND
MORGANA,
THE CHILDREN
OF A DESTINY
SHARED.

BORN RIVALS
TO THE BITTER
END, AND ONLY
ONE WORTHY OF
THE POWER...



I'M NOWHERE
NEAR AS PERFECT AS
YOU FANCY YOURSELF,
MASTERMIND, AND I'M
CERTAINLY NOT THE BEST
HUMANITY HAS TO
OFFER...

FAR BETTER
PEOPLE THAN ME
HAVE WORN THESE
COLORS BEFORE, AND
MANY MORE WILL
AGAIN SOMEDAY, LONG
AFTER I'M DEAD AND
GONE. OF THAT, I
HAVE NO DOUBT.

BUT IF YOU
THINK THAT MAKES
YOU THE SECOND
BLOODY COMING,
OLD CHAP...?



THINK
AGAIN!



KNOCK

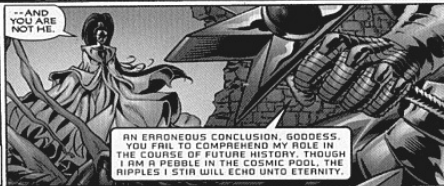


AT LAST, CAPTAIN
BRITAIN IS NO
MORE, AND THE
POWER IS MINE...



--AND
YOU ARE
NOT HE.

EXCALIBUR
KNOWS BUT
ONE MASTER,
COMPUTER--



AN ERRONEOUS CONCLUSION, GODDESS.
YOU FAIL TO COMPREHEND MY ROLE IN
THE COURSE OF FUTURE HISTORY. THOUGH
I AM A PEBBLE IN THE COSMIC POOL, THE
RIPPLES I STIR WILL ECHO UNTO ETERNITY.

BUT YOU, ROMA, ARE
AN ANACHRONISM, A
FOSSIL, A RELIC.

THE FUTURE
HOLDS NO
PLACE FOR
YOU!



THEN
WE HAVE
MUCH IN
COMMON,
MASTERMIND.
FOR I, TOO,
HAVE SEEN
THE FUTURE
AND ABSENT
FROM THE
OMNIVERSE
THOUGH MY
PRESENCE
MAY BE...



SO IS
YOURS.

WHAT -->001001<- ARE
YOU -->0001001<- DOING?!

FINISHING
THE GAME.



CHECKMATE.



N00->1001<-000!!!
EXCALIBUR IS ->1001001<-
MINE! IT IS ->1001001<-
MY DESTINY!!!

FRRA ->1001001<-
TTTTHH->1001001<-
EEERAA...*



ROMA,
ARE YOU ALL
RIGHT? WHAT
DID HE DO
TO YOU?



HOLD ON, NOW. I'M SUPPOSED
TO REPLACE YOU? DON'T BE
DAFT, WOMAN. I'M NO GOD.
I'M JUST A MAN.

SOMETIMES
A MAN IS ALL
IT TAKES.



MY TIME IS NEAR ITS END.
LIKE MY FATHER BEFORE
ME, I SHALL SOON
LEAVE OTHERWORLD,
FOR MY DESTINY LIES
ELSEWHERE.

YOURS,
HOWEVER,
WAITS JUST
OUTSIDE. IF YOU
HAVE THE COURAGE TO
FACE IT.

STORY
OF MY
LIFE.

NOTHING
OF ANY LASTING
CONSEQUENCE. THE
SWORD OF MIGHT
WAS NOT HIS TO
WIELD. IT DESTROYED
MASTERMIND AS IT
DOES ALL THOSE
UNWORTHY OF ITS
POWER.

WHICH IS WHY,
HENCEFORTH,
YOU SHALL BE ITS
GUARDIAN. WITH
IT, YOU SHALL
PROTECT THE
OMNIVERSE, JUST
AS I HAVE DONE
IN MERLIN'S
ABSENCE.



UP YOU GO,
LADS AND LASSIES.
ENOUGH O' THIS
LAZIN' ABOUT...

TELL ME
WE DIDN'T JUST
OBLITERATE A
GODDESS...

ROMA'S
INSIDE THE
CASTLE GIVING OL'
CHIPS FOR BRAINS
A RATHER SEVERE
AND VERDUE
THRASHING.

BUT
WHERE'S MY
HUSBAND?!



«Ahem»

BRIAN!



OH,
THANK
YOU
GOD!
THANK
YOU!
THANK
YOU!
THANK
YOU!

GOOD
LORD OLD
SON, YE LOOK
LIKE DEATH
WARMED
OVER.

YOU
SHOULD SEE
THE OTHER
FELLOW.



YOU
HEROES HAVE
FOUGHT HARD
AND SURVIVED
MUCH THIS DAY,
BUT THE ORDEAL IS
NOT QUITE OVER.
THERE REMAINS
ONE FINAL TEST
TO BE PASSED.



THEIR
FATE IS IN
YOUR
HANDS...



CRUSADER...?

JUST GET
ON WITH IT
BEFORE I
CHANGE MY
MIND AND
START
BASHING
SKULLS.

LOOK INWARD, BRIAN BRADDOCK, SEE YOURSELF AS YOUR TRULY ARE. YOU ARE THE SWORD. YOU ARE EXCALIBUR...

I AM THE SWORD...
I AM EXCALIBUR...

YES! SPEAK THE WORDS! THEY WILL UNLEASH THE DIVINE SPARK WITHIN YOU!

I WILL WIELD MY POWER WISELY WHERE LESSER MEN WOULD DO SO FOOLISHLY. I WILL USE IT NOT TO HACK--

--BUT TO HEAL!



WE'RE...
WE'RE NORMAL AGAIN.

HUMAN...

THAT'S QUITE A GIFT, BRIAN, YOU'VE GIVEN THOSE KIDS SOMETHING THEY HAVEN'T HAD IN A LONG TIME, IF EVER.

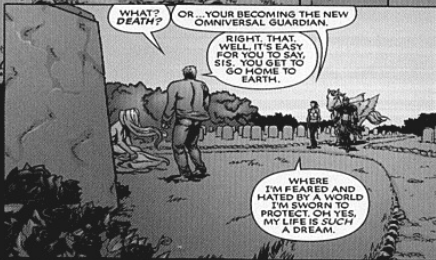
WHAT'S THAT, DARLING?

A FUTURE...





IT CAN'T BE ANY WORSE THAN YOU'RE IMAGINING, Y'KNOW...



WHAT? DEATH?

OR...YOUR BECOMING THE NEW OMNIVERSAL GUARDIAN.

RIGHT. THAT. WELL, IT'S EASY FOR YOU TO SAY, SIS. YOU GET TO GO HOME TO EARTH.

WHERE I'M FEARED AND HATED BY A WORLD I'M SWORN TO PROTECT. OH YES, MY LIFE IS SUCH A DREAM.

Y'KNOW, DANE, I'M THINKING ABOUT STARTING A NEW CAPTAIN BRITAIN CORPS. SORT OF AN INTERDIMENSIONAL KNIGHTS OF THE ROUND TABLE....

IF YOU PROMISE TO KEEP YOUR HANDS OFF MY QUEEN, THE BLACK KNIGHT WOULD BE A MOST WELCOME SIR LANCELOT...



A TEMPTING OFFER, BRIAN. BUT I SHOULD PROBABLY GET BACK TO THE AVENGERS. I'VE BEEN AWAY TOO LONG.

THIS ISN'T GOOD-BYE FOREVER, IS IT? YOU WILL COME BACK AND VISIT US AGAIN SOMETIME, WON'T YOU?

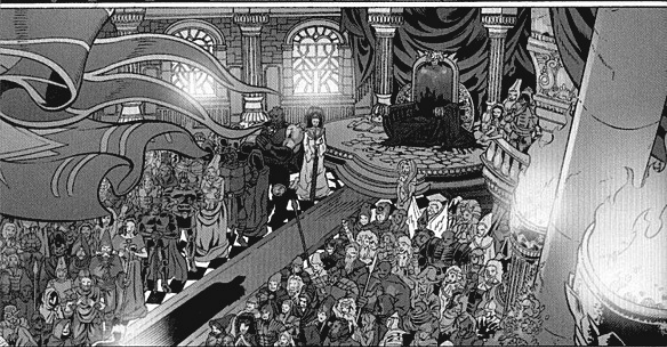


OF COURSE, MEGGAN. I CAN'T WAIT TO SEE HOW BIG OF AN ARSE MY TWIN BROTHER'S MADE OF HIMSELF ONCE HE TAKES THE THRONE.

THOUGH THE NEXT TIME I'M IN TOWN, I EXPECT TO HEAR THE PITTER PATT OF LITTLE ROYAL FEET...







**LONG LIVE
CAPTAIN
BRITAIN!**

**LONG
LIVE THE
KING!**





"YING."
INDEED...

All has come to
pass precisely as you
predicted, eminence.

Your reactivation of the
Mastermind mainframe has
successfully catalyzed
Captain Britain's
ASCENDANCY. His destiny
is at last FULFILLED.

AND SO
A NEW
EPOCH
DAWNS...



A NASCENT
TIMELINE,
DIVERGENT FROM
THE INEVITABLE
STREAM OF
FUTURE HISTORY,
NOW FLOWS INTO
THE GREATER SEA
OF COSMIC
CHRONOLOGY.

THE
POSSIBILITIES FOR
TEMPORAL DOMINATION
ARE INFINITE. AND
WHEN TIME IS
CONQUERED...

THEN SHALL
KANG REIGN
SUPREME!



THE BEGINNING